

Amid Watershed Reforms: A Case of Strategic Human Resource Planning at a Local Zambian Telecommunications Establishment

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Abstract

This descriptive study was carried out to evaluate the strategic human resource planning process at a selected local Zambian telecommunications establishment in light of organizational changes. The establishment is a former State Owned Enterprise (SOE). It has been observed that human resource planning components of job analysis, recruitment and placement, performance appraisal, training and development and reward systems are dysfunctional to changes taking place in the form of de-regulation of the telecommunications industry. The selected establishment is now competing for customers and skilled man power and globalisation and regional integration, social cultural dynamics and turbulences in the technological environments. The data was analysed using secondary data, records and other documents from the inside and outside the selected telecommunications establishment were used, such as corporate reports, personal records, productivity and sales improvement and financial reports and the questionnaire was quantified by using Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to test for relationships between human resource planning and organizational change. Research findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between human resource planning and organizational change at the telecommunications establishment. Dissipation analysis was not given full attention, the establishment was last reviewed 13 years ago and proved to be a barrier to the expansion of certain engineering sections and the performance appraisal system was subjective. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the establishment overhauls human resource management, applies strategic management in its planning processes and invites external consultants in the process of organizational change and development.

Keywords: *Approved establishment, Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), manpower planning, strategic human resource planning, state owned enterprise (SOE), Dissipation analysis, Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA)*

1. Introduction

Zambia was one of the earliest countries in Africa to embark on a major privatization exercise as part of its economic reform programme which started in 1992. Although progress was initially slow, mainly due to the inertia associated with start-up activities and generally opposition from interested parties, the programme picked up momentum, culminating in the rapid divestiture of public enterprises that many have compared only to privatization programmes in Eastern Europe.

It is worth observing that the Zambian telecommunications sector has achieved significant strides and positive development over the last two decades. Based on the 1994 watershed reforms, which opened the market to new entrants, the sector has experienced rapid growth, albeit starting from a very low base. However, low penetration rates and high prices prevailing in the market place suggest that the market is still lagging behind amid what is happening in the world at large and that there is room for considerably more competition.

Given such a background, the telecommunications industry needs to strategically manage its key success factors in order to ensure success. Market players such as employers and managers need to know that organizations are much more than a random collection of machines, money and people. These resources are of no value unless invested into activities and organized into routines and systems that ensure that products or services are produced which are valued by the final consumer /user.

2. Problem Statement

In the recent past, there has been a renewed surge in the telecommunications reform process, which had stalled since

the 1994 liberalisation of the sector. In the period 2009 to 2010, the government has undertaken major reform initiatives that are intended to further open the market to new entrants and to enhance competition. These measures include the development of a national Information and Communications Technology (ICT) policy, enactment of the Information and Communications Act in 2009, partial privatization of the loss-making incumbent State Owned Enterprise, and liberalisation of the international gateway, which has resulted in significant tariff reductions (Government of Republic of Zambia, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act (Act No. xx of 2009).

However, the much-anticipated further market opening is unlikely to happen soon. In the wake of the decision to privatize the local State Owned Enterprise, the decision to allocate a substantial capacity of local electricity supply company optic fibre network to the local State Owned Enterprise to make it more attractive to potential investors gives the State Owned Enterprise significant dominance in the provision of broadband services. This policy drift is in sharp contrast to the core objective of the National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy and ICT Act of 2009, which is development of a competitive ICT industry in Zambia. Government should rescind the ban on issuance of new mobile and Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) licences if the sector is to grow through new competitive investments. In the face of these developments, the task of the Zambian Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) is a very difficult undertaking. Results from a recent Telecommunication Regulatory Environment (TRE) assessment, suggest that additional and significant challenges remain around interconnection and tariff regulation, consumer protection and quality of services. To effectively tackle these challenges, Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) needs to enhance its credibility and claim the autonomy bestowed on it by the ICT Act of 2009 by building on its competences, and ensuring transparency and predictability in decision-making (Government of Republic of Zambia, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act (Act No. xx of 2009).

All these changes including that of globalisation and Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) has led to evolution of companies into multinational corporations (MNCs) and global corporations have affected organizations in a number of ways such that others have failed to cope while others have managed to survive and almost all are fighting for scarce resources and markets for their products and/or services to sustain their operations and remain competitive and profitable.

In response to this, five process models of organizational change were developed to shade understanding of the recommended change management principles that increase the probability of successful implementation. Process models of organizational change include specific change management principles that can be followed by organizations to increase their probability of successful implementation (Kinicki & Kreitner 2006). The importance of process models of organizational change was supported by Holt, Self, Thal & Lo's (2003) comment that the extent to which organizations are able to achieve the benefits of new business practices is directly affected by the influence strategies used by organizational leaders to implement the change.

Although these process models originated in the 1990's and early 2000's, these process models are still relevant to current research and are widely cited in the literature today (Kinicki and Kreitner 2006). Ates and Bititchi (2011) noted that organizations today still place heavy emphasis on implementation, although unfortunately the planning and preparation phases are sometimes less emphasized, which can lead to less success.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- ❖ Establish how the telecommunications establishment is doing to its human resource planning in the context of organizational changes and environmental challenges that it is faced with.
- ❖ Identify the dissipation rates and patterns as well as identify the major variables that seem to influence them.
- ❖ Find out what proactive human resources policies are being put in place in helping employees cope with the threat of HIV/AIDS pandemic on employee performance/productivity.
- ❖ Make recommendations on human resource planning within the telecommunications establishment.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Theoretical framework

The more central roles of human resource planning are to prepare dates which assists management in making decision about the future direction of the organization, to help reduce uncertainty and risk by supplying pertinent information about

the future and to promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness and optimal utilisation of human resources.

4.2 A brief history of telecommunications in Zambia

The history of telecommunications in Zambia (then known as Northern Rhodesia) dates back to 1913, when the first manual phone was installed in Livingstone. From 1913 until the advent of multi-party democracy in mid-1990s and the reform of markets globally, the provision of telecommunications services in the country remained a state monopoly.

From 1991 to 2005, government policy on telecommunications was informed by the general economic policy with emphasis on private sector-led economic growth and the Telecommunications Act of 1994, which provided a framework for liberalization of the sector (Habeenzu, 2003).

In 2001, the Government, with assistance from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), embarked on the formulation of a National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) policy. The policy formulation process – which was completed in 2005, was characterised by extensive stakeholder consultations, involving private sector, civil society, academia, local government structures and professional associations. This prolonged process also served to raise general public awareness of the role of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in fostering socio-economic development (Munsaka, 2009).

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy was approved by the Government in 2005, on the eve of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) meetings in Tunis, and was officially launched in 2006 (Government of Republic of Zambia, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act (Act No. xx of 2009).

The former state owned Telecommunications establishment came into being in 1994 following the passing of the Telecommunications Act (Chapter 469 of the Laws of Zambia). The establishment was responsible for the country's telecommunications services under the supervision of the Communications Authority (CAZ). The Telecommunications Act has since been repealed and replaced with The Information and Communication Technologies Act No. 15 of 2009, which assigned The Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) as the regulatory body (Government of Republic of Zambia, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act (Act No. xx of 2009).

Being the largest telecommunications provider and 100% government owned, the telecommunications establishment enjoyed a wider scope of operating services than its local competitors and had a monopoly in the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and in the provision of Voice of Internet Protocol (VoIP) (www.statehouse.gov.zm).

Over the years however, this establishment became increasingly inefficient, lacking the resources and vigor to modernize and compete with other international telecommunications competitors (<http://www.reuters.com>).

In 2009, the Zambian government (then under Movement for Multi-party Democracy, MMD) made the decision to privatize the local state owned enterprise. In June 2010, 75% of shares of the state owned enterprise were sold for US\$257 million to a Libyan Multi – National Company leaving the Zambian Government still owning 25%.

4.3 Human Resource Planning: What is it?

When a new organization is set up, it needs human resources to fill up positions in the organization structure so that it can function. It needs people with the right skills, knowledge and abilities to carry out all the work as per respective job descriptions in all organizational areas.

Human resource planning is defined differently by different authors.

According to Milkovich and Boudreau (1993) human resource planning is the process of collecting and using information on the base of which it can be discussed the amount of resources spent on personnel activities.

According to Koubek (2007), personnel planning serves to achieve the goals of the organization by development prediction, setting the targets and realizing arrangements leading to current and future ensure of business tasks with adequate manpower.

Cascio (1992) states that human resource planning can be defined as an effort to anticipate future business and environmental demands on an organization and to provide the employees a way to fulfill that business in order to satisfy those demands.

Based on the definitions from different authors mentioned above, it can be said that each definition is a little different in its nature although they have common ideas that entail that the enterprises must have human resources necessary in the future in order to ensure the business objectives and requirements. This leads the enterprise to the have competitiveness and prosperity.

Human resource planning can be assessed in a wider perspective to mean comprehensive and balanced

approach to human resources (plan of the personnel development of employees) and in the strict meaning –it means planning the need of employees and planning the coverage of these needs (plan of employees, plan of staffing the jobs).

5. The Organizational Context of Human Resource Planning

Human resource planning occurs within the context of the organization. "The extent to which it is used, and the approach adapted, will be contingent on the extent to which management reorganizes that success depends on forecasting future people requirements and implementing plans to satisfy those requirements", according to Armstrong (2008). The approach will also be affected by the degree to which it is possible to make accurate forecasts. Organizations working in difficult environments in which future activity levels are impossible to predict may depend on adhoc and short term measurements to recruit and keep people. However, even these businesses may benefit from those aspects of human resource planning that are concerned with policies for attracting and retaining key staff.

6. Schools of Thought of Strategic Management and Planning

According to Chermack, Lynham, and Ruona (2001), there are three overarching schools of thought regarding the approach to strategic management and planning. These strategic management and planning schools of thought include: the rationalist, the evolutionist, and the processural (Chermack et al., 2001:12).

Strategic planning conducted under the assumptions of the Rationalist School believe that "there is indeed one best solution" (Chermack et al., 2001: 12). The strategist or strategic team is thus charged with developing the best solution or finding the one best or closest answer (Chermack et al., 2001).

Furthermore, strategists and organizations that subscribe to the Rationalist School of thought believe that only an elite few within the organization convene and formulate the strategic plan annually (Chermack et al., 2001).

According to Mintzberg (1990 as cited in Chermack et al., 2001), the Evolutionary School focuses on the past and retrospect. It believes that systems (organizations) can develop a memory of successful previous strategies (Chermack et al., 2001). In this regard, the unsuccessful and successful strategies are filtered and only successful strategies are utilized to drive success.

"The Processural School asserts that, although it is not possible to deliver optimal strategies through rational thinking alone, organizations members can instill and create processes within organizations that make it a more adaptive, whole system, capable of learning from mistakes" (Chermack et al., 2001). The Processural School believes that alternative futures are possible through the utilization of change management concepts (Chermack et al., 2001).

Van der Heijden (1997, 2000 as cited in Chermack et al., 2001) suggests that the Processural School views the organization as a living organism.

7. Organizational Change

Studies have shown that approximately 70 percent of planned organizational change initiatives fail. One of the primary causes for these failures is the lack of reliable and valid diagnostic instruments to assess and track an organization's capacity for change (Pelletiere, 2006).

Too often, conventional approaches to organizational transformation resemble the Big Bang theory. Change occurs all at once, on a large scale and often in response to crisis. These approaches assume that people need to be jolted out of complacency to embrace new ideas and practices. To make that happen, senior management creates a sense of urgency or takes dramatic action to trigger change. Yet we know from a great deal of experience that Big Bang transformation attempts often fail, fostering employee discontent and producing mediocre solutions with little lasting impact (Burnes & Jackson, 2011; Golden-Biddle & Mao, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2008 and Beer & Nohria, 2000).

Organizational change involves shifting the meanings that people attribute to the activities in which they are involved. That is, "there is hardly an organizational change which does not involve the re-definition, the re-labeling, or the re-interpretation of an organisational activity" (Tsoukas, 2005:99). In this regard, how a change is framed is part of the process of "selling" the change (Marshak & Grant, 2008).

8. Research Methodology

A quantitative research design was used in this study to investigate strategic human resource planning in a selected local

Zambian telecommunications establishment.

8.1 Sources of Data

The major sources of data were primary and secondary. In establishing the background to the problem, secondary and internal establishment data were utilised in the process. In achieving the goal of the study, primary data relating to the use of questionnaires were used.

8.2 Population and sample of the study

The population consisted of members of staff at a selected local Zambian telecommunications establishment. Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013) defined population as the complete set of events, people or things to which the research findings are to be applied.

In this study, the research population constituted of Administration/Support (in this case Human Resources), Technical/Professional and Unionised staff.

8.3 Sample size and Sampling Procedure

To successfully conduct the research, stratified random sampling procedure was used. Stratified random sampling, according to Babbie (2013), is a modification of random sampling in which you divide the whole population into two or more strata based on one or more attributes. In this study, the participants were divided according to three categories of staff and a sample of 150 employees of which 25% came from the Administration/Support staff, another 25% from the Technical/Professional staff and the rest, and 50% from the unionized staff. The population size was 3255.

For this study, the probability sampling technique was used because it was considered to be unbiased and it was capable of leading to conclusions of wide general use.

8.4 Research Design

For a descriptive study of this nature, the methods used in the process of data collection were person-to-person interviews, record inspection and observation. Both structured and unstructured questionnaires and interviews were used in getting primary data. For the purposes of collecting secondary data, records and other documents from inside and outside the selected telecommunications Establishment were used, such as corporate reports, personal records, productivity and sales improvement and financial reports.

In case of internal and external validation of data, this was done by way of carrying out further discussions with certain staff members from all categories who were not part of the population sample and getting their views or opinions on issues that were raised in the questionnaires or interviews.

8.5 Data collection

As the study is concerned with establishing how the selected communications establishment was doing its manpower planning in the context of organizational change processes, it was decided that what variables were going to be used. The questionnaire was constructed in a manner whereby responses were quantified by using Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to process the results. Thus a Likert scale was used for almost all questions with the responses ranging from the least to the highest score. As a result, respondents indicated the degree of agreement or disagreement on the issues that were raised in the questionnaire. The classification of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree and not certain made it possible for comparisons of agreement and disagreement to be made.

The nominal data method was used for other variables that need to be classified into pairs or groups such as dichotomies, like male or female. Thus, nominal scales were used for those statements where respondents were expected to state, in qualitative terms, category of their age, sex, etc. for some statements or questions, the list of alternatives did not exhaust all possible categories, but it was made sure that it included only those categories that were relevant to the study and the population tested, and therefore, could be classified in every case in the process of coding.

8.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of running various tests on data that one has obtained at the end of a research study. Therefore, it involves decisions concerning tests to be made and the data to be used in these tests. In the final analysis, the end result is formation of conclusions that can be used for future decision making.

8.7 Research Findings and Discussion

It was generally observed that employees are aware of organizational change in the form of transformations in the structure, technology and people that is taking place at the selected telecommunications establishment. For instance, the majority of respondents agreed that the establishment needs to focus on providing a highly efficient, effective and reliable service to its customer base in order to survive the fierce competition from other telecommunications organisations.

Furthermore, from the observations made during the study, it was discovered that structural change has also been driven by the need for the establishment to respond to both internal and external demands.

In terms of technology the establishment has adopted to technological change as a way of improving service provision. This was seen in that of the individual/unionized employees interviewed majority agreed that there has been a visible change in technology. 12.3% agreed while 3.5% were not certain.

Change was also taking place in terms of people by ways of altering behaviour patterns so as to make them have the right attitude towards work. To consolidate this assertion, the study revealed that of the management and technical officers who participated in the study, 81% strongly agreed and 19 % simply agreed that corporate culture needs to change from one that is traditional, conservative and rigid to one that encourages flexibility, innovativeness and focus on customer satisfaction. At the same time 85.7% asserted that the current organizational culture is hindering the establishment in the process of adapting itself to environmental changes. Responses from unionized staff also indicated that 98.2% expressed agreement that people at the establishment needed to change their work behaviour and become results oriented in their approach to boost productivity, 1.8% were uncertain of this.

Nevertheless, the study revealed that technical and marketing areas are under-manning. 66.7% of the individual respondents asserted (with 28.6% disagreeing) that their departments are facing a critical shortage of skilled/professional manpower. On the other hand departments that provide support services were reported to be over-manned. The study revealed that 77.2% of the respondents attributed this mainly to lack of participation by sections in the human resource planning process.

In the job analysis observation, 66% of the respondents in the human resources category strongly agreed and 34% simply agreed that job analysis exercises would help in enhancing the human resource planning process in the establishment as demands of the jobs versus the supply of human resources will be known.

Recruitment and placement on whether there is a proper placement of people in jobs revealed that 35.1% of unionized employees agreed, 15.8% strongly disagreed whilst 36.8% disagreed. 42.9% of management and technical officials interviewed strongly agreed and 47.6% agreed that human resource planning at the selected telecommunications establishment was not effective because some people are in wrong positions and therefore, misplaced. Only 9.5% agreed with this statement. The study revealed that the company failed to attract skilled labour such as engineers, technicians and business managers or sales and marketing executives leading to the present situation of having low production, low service quality and lack of marketing.

Findings of the study further show that the establishment had an appraisal system in place called "Management-Felt System" which was done by a supervisor for a subordinate. For management officials, panels were usually used in appraising performance. However, this system was seen as subjective and biased. Of all unionized employee interviewed, 59.6 % agreed that the performance appraisal system was subjective. 15.8% disagreed, 5.3% strongly disagreed while 19.3% were uncertain.

Training and development as a strategy is one way of enhancing internal strength or distinctive competencies of an organization in that it leads to the development of people's skills and updating their knowledge. It is however interesting that the selected establishment's training policy focuses on developing school leavers (Grade 12s) into artisans and technicians. This proved costly as it takes 3 to 4 years to develop technicians and even then, these graduate level skills cannot match the demands of the highly technologically advanced jobs that they are expected to perform. Ironically, it was also discovered that the establishment was being used as a training ground by some of the young talented employees. 19.0% of the management and technical officials strongly agreed to this assertion whilst 52.4% simply agreed, 4.8% strongly disagreed, 9.5% disagreed while 14.3% were not certain. Unionised employees

interviewed called for awareness campaigns to be conducted on the need for people to change their behaviours in the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, management needs to address this issue seriously. On the same issue, 71.4% of management and technical officials asserted that the establishment's stock of skilled and professional man power is being threatened by the pandemic while 4.8% disagreed and 23.8% were not certain.

An analysis of dissipation rates and patterns revealed that of all human resource officials who participated in the study, 81% responded by saying that skilled engineers and technicians are leaving the Organization for greener pastures. It was reported that at one time the company lost ten graduate engineers within a period of two weeks who had been recruited from a top university in the country. In fact, 14.3% of the management and technical strongly agreed and 66.7% agreed that the company's skilled/professional manpower is leaving to join other organizations due to failure by management in providing incentives. Of the unionized employees interviewed, 36.8% strongly agreed, 36.8% agreed, 8.8% strongly disagreed, 12.3% disagreed with 5.3% not certain that the pay and benefit package does not reflect the effect of inflation on salaries.

The mere fact that the company's establishment has not been reviewed for the last 13 years just shows how human resource planning is lacking as seen in table 1 below.

Table 1: the approved establishment remained the same till 2012. No variance analysis was done in the process of manpower planning.

| Period from | Approved | Actual | Variance |
|--------------------------|----------|--------|----------|
| 01/04/96 to 31/03/97 | 3,503 | 3,250 | -253 |
| 01/04/97 to 31/03/97 | 3,503 | 3,287 | -216 |
| 01/04/98 to 31/03/99 | 3,503 | 3,225 | -278 |
| 01/04/2000 to 31/03/2001 | 3,503 | 3,245 | -258 |
| 01/04/2001 to 31/03/2002 | 3,503 | 3,228 | -280 |
| 01/04/2002 to 31/03/2003 | 3,503 | 3,266 | -237 |
| 01/04/2003 to 31/03/2004 | 3,503 | 3,213 | -290 |
| 01/04/2004 to 31/03/2005 | 3,503 | 3,254 | -249 |
| 01/04/2005 to 31/03/2006 | 3,503 | 3,244 | -259 |
| 01/04/2006 to 31/03/2007 | 3,503 | 3,233 | -280 |
| 01/04/2007 to 31/03/2008 | 3,503 | 3,288 | -215 |
| 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009 | 3,503 | 3,211 | -292 |
| 01/04/2009 to 31/03/2010 | 3,503 | 3,234 | -269 |
| 01/04/2010 to 31/03/2011 | 3,503 | 3,210 | -293 |
| 01/04/2011 to 31/03/2012 | 3,503 | 3,212 | -291 |

The following table provides data on labour turnover for the period given in table 1

Table 2: No information was provided on the reasons why there was a high incidence of deaths during the period up to 31st March, 1998. This could be attributed to a lack of dissipation analysis.

| Year/Period | Cause | No of Affected Employees | Total % (Turnover) |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 31/03/97 | Resignation | 1 | 36/3,250=1.1% |
| | Death | 12 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 12 | |
| | Retirement | 11 | |
| | Total | 36 | |
| 31/03/98 | Resignation | 4 | 162/3,287=4.7% |
| | Death | 77 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 37 | |
| | Retirement | 44 | |
| | Total | 162 | |
| 31/03/99 | Resignation | 7 | 55/3,225=1.7% |
| | Death | 17 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 6 | |
| | Retirement | 25 | |
| | Total | 55 | |
| 31/03/2000 | Resignation | 0 | 0/3,245=0% |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 0 | |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----|----------------|
| | Retirement | 0 | |
| | Total | 0 | |
| 31/03/2001 | Resignation | 1 | |
| | Death | 13 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 12 | |
| | Retirement | 11 | 37/3,228=1.2% |
| | Total | 37 | |
| 31/03/2002 | Resignation | 2 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 12 | |
| | Retirement | 12 | 26/3,228=0.3% |
| | Total | 26 | |
| 31/03/2003 | Resignation | 12 | |
| | Death | 1 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 13 | |
| | Retirement | 31 | 57/3,266=2.8% |
| | Total | 57 | |
| 31/03/2004 | Resignation | 0 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 0 | |
| | Retirement | 0 | 0/3,213=0% |
| | Total | 0 | |
| 31/03/2005 | Resignation | 13 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 7 | |
| | Retirement | 12 | 32/3,254=1.1% |
| | Total | 32 | |
| 31/03/2006 | Resignation | 0 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 1 | 4/3,244=0.01% |
| | Retirement | 1 | |
| | Total | 2 | |
| 31/03/2007 | Resignation | 0 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 14 | |
| | Retirement | 5 | 38/3,288= 1.2% |
| | Total | 19 | |
| 31/03/2008 | Resignation | 23 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 1 | 31/3,211=1.3% |
| | Retirement | 7 | |
| | Total | 31 | |
| 31/03/2009 | Resignation | 14 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 3 | |
| | Retirement | 23 | 40/3,211=1.6% |
| | Total | 40 | |
| 31/03/2010 | Resignation | 9 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 0 | |
| | Retirement | 1 | 10/3,234=0.12% |
| | Total | 10 | |
| 31/03/2011 | Resignation | 7 | |
| | Death | 0 | |
| | Dismiss/Discharge | 0 | |
| | Retirement | 17 | 24/3,210=0.23% |
| | Total | 24 | |
| 31/03/2012 | Resignation | 0 | |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|---------------|
| Death | 6 | |
| Dismiss/Discharge | 0 | 7/3,212=0.06% |
| Retirement | 1 | |
| Total | 7 | |

8.8 Conclusions and Recommendations

The selected telecommunications company is changing its structure, technology and culture of its employees so as to adapt to the environmental changes and shift its emphasis from that of satisfying needs of the government (shareholders) alone to that of meeting the demands of its customers and stakeholders.

The establishment was not managing its human resource planning process in the light of organizational change. The following were the reasons why:

- There is no relationship between the changes taking place in the human resource system of the organization and its establishment. The establishment has not reviewed its establishment in the last 13 years.
- The establishment is overwhelmed by the changes taking place in the environment. Factors like technology, economy, politics and social-culture environment are all pressing hard on the establishment.
- The reward structure of the Organization has failed to have an impact on the recruitment, recruitment, retention and motivation of skilled people. It has been cited as one of the major contributing factors to scarcity of skilled manpower in critical areas of engineering and marketing among others. The trend in this establishment is that people leave for greener pastures.
- In fact, certain employees are using the establishment as a training ground or stepping stone because the same reason of having no good conditions of service to help in retaining them.
- A number of people have been lost to HIV/AIDS. As certain sections of the establishment, like the technical and engineering have admitted that it is a threat to their manpower, the company needs to come up with a comprehensive HIV/AIDS wellness programme.
- There is little participation of human resource planners in the corporate planning process as witnessed by a lack of relationship between business planning and human resource planning. It is clear now that programmes such as expansion of telephone networks or introduction of internet services lack the skilled human resources that are critical to the maintenance of the telecommunications facilities, the immediate rectification of faults, the immediate connection of customers and the provision of a high quality service.

The Zambian communications market has experienced significant improvement over the last decade. This has been characterized by rapid growth in the mobile voice market and increased investments in broadband infrastructure, broadening access and usage of ICTs. Recent developments in the sector include the liberalization of the international gateway, "privatization" of the incumbent local state-owned enterprise and the passing of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act of 2009 and Electronic and Communications Transactions Act of 2009. These, and the introduction of new licensing regulations, are likely to provide a basis for stimulating increased and new investment in the sector (Government of Republic of Zambia, Act (Act No. 21 of 2009).

However, the widely anticipated favorable market entry conditions and enhanced competition premised on the provisions of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act of 2009's new legal and regulatory framework have been severely constrained by the government's policy decision to restrict market entry to existing players until 2015 (Government of Republic of Zambia, Act (Act No. 21 of 2009).

The foregoing serves to demonstrate that having a good Information and Communications Technology (ICT) policy or state-of-the-art legislation is not enough. Much work remains to be done to ensure that the legal and regulatory framework works to nurture an environment that stimulates increased investment in the sector (Habeenzu, 2003).

In final conclusion, this study reveals that the issue of the privatization programme by the telecommunications establishment has made below average progress due to the fact that there is really no proper human resource planning amid the national and global reforms in the establishment.

The recommendations are as follows:

- The establishment needs to adapt a contingency approach in its restructuring programme. It needs to come up with the best organizational design that best fits the existing environmental conditions and demands. Its current mechanistic structure is inappropriate given the dynamics of the telecommunications industry and the need for the former monopoly to adapt to the ever changing environmental conditions driven by the competitive, free market and liberalised economy.
- The management should apply strategic management especially strategic planning in the process of

organizational change. By doing this, it will be able to formulate human resource plans for the entire organization that will ensure a beneficial and optimal fit between human resources and the structure and technology.

- c) The management should analyse the dissipation rates and patterns and make decisions based on such analyses that will help in addressing problems associated with high labour turnover of skilled manpower. Statistics and records of dissipation by department, function, sex, age and profession should be maintained on a computerized system so that the information could easily be accessed for such purposes like trend analysis or time series for the company to have a clear picture of how movements of people out of the organization affects the human resource system.
- d) Management should restructure the reward system to get rid of dysfunctions, especially in situations where certain subordinates draw higher salaries than their supervisors. This was highlighted as why graduate engineers left to join other organizations with better reward structures. Also, conditions of service should be improved to the level where they can help attract and retain skilled professional manpower that is lacking in certain areas of operations like marketing and engineering.
- e) Human resource managers should participate in corporate planning process by aligning their human resource plans with plans of other departments or functions of the Organization. The human resource planning process should not only be used to solve short-term problems but should be focused on issues pertaining to organizational changes that may occur in the future. They should be related to the long term business plans of the Organization.
- f) Human resources officials need to be trained on how to handle organizational change processes and the problems that may arise during the implementation stage. Organizational development approaches, such as the use of external consultants to help with change process, are considered as strategies for helping the organization increase its capacity for effective action and increasing personal responsibility for planning and implementing change in people.

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